It makes little difference how the vinegar is got into the stomach, Dr. McB. says, "whether as a drink diluted with water, with or without sugar, or mixed with various articles of food. I directed our men to add it to their bean-soup and to their boiled hominy; also, to sop their bread in it, sweetened or not, according to taste or notion. Sugar is not injurious, but, I think, rather beneficial to its effect. A very nice pie can be made by soaking broken bits of cracker in vinegar, then adding sugar and spices, precisely as in making apple pie. This is as easy made as apple pie, and eaten in the dark would pass anywhere for a fruit pie.

"Another form: I sweeten good vinegar to taste; then stir in flour or common starch in small quantity, and bake as a custard or pumpkin pie."

[No fact in therapeutics is better established than the anti-scorbutic properties of vinegar, and the article is always supplied to ships on long voyages with that view; nevertheless the observations of Dr. McB. are useful as calling attention to the article especially in the scorbutic condition into which armies in the field are apt to fall where proper hygienic precautions are not observed.]

Oakum as a Substitute for Lint in Gunshot and other Suppurating Wounds.—In our previous No. (pp. 566–67) we noticed the commendatory remarks of Dr. Sayre on the use of oakum as a substitute for lint, and the grounds for this preference. Our experienced friend, Dr. W. S. W. RUSCHENBERGER, dissents from the conclusions of Dr. S., and, in a recent No. (Oct. 9, 1862) of the *Boston Med. and Surg. Journal*, he gives some good reasons for his dissent.

"In order," he says, "to obtain an idea of the comparative absorbent power or capillary force of oakum, cotton, lint, and tow, small parcels of these articles, of ascertained weight and dimensions, were gently placed on the surface of water in a basin, and carefully weighed again after removal. The weight of water absorbed by each, thus ascertained, is stated in the following table:—

	Weight.	Dimensions.	Time in contact with water.	Weight of water absorbed.
Cotton (wool) . .	40 grs.	3 in. diam.	1 hour 10 min.	8 grs. = 1-5
Oakum	"	2½ "	" "	10 " = ¼
Tow (from hemp) .	"	2½ "	" "	250 " = 6.25 times
Coarse lint (shoddy)	"	2½ "	1 minute	280 " = 7 "
Scraped lint . . .	"	2½ "	Instantly	298 " = 7.45 "
Patent lint . . .	"	1¾ by 3 in.	4 minutes	299 " = 7.47 "

"Forty grains of cotton submerged and slightly squeezed under water for a few seconds, was found to retain, without dripping, 270 grains; and an equal weight of oakum treated in the same manner, only 94 grains of water. The oakum retained little more than twice its weight, and the cotton nearly seven times its weight of water.

"The inference from these experiments is that the capillary force of patent lint is nearly thirty times, and that of tow twenty-five times, greater than oakum; and the capillary force of oakum is only one-fifth greater than that of cotton. Oakum absorbed one-fourth, and cotton one-fifth, of its weight; but tow 6.25 times, coarse lint 7 times, scraped lint 7.45 times, and patent lint 7.47 times, its weight of water.

"If the property of capillarity alone is to determine the choice of tissue or substance for covering suppurating wounds, any description of lint or tow is to be preferred to oakum.

"Tow has been long employed as an outside dressing or recipient of profuse discharges; and also as a swab in cleansing offensive suppurating wounds, where sponge was not sufficiently abundant to be expended in this way. The objection to tow is, that there are apt to be sharp or hard spiculæ adhering amongst its fibres, which give pain when brought against a sensitive surface; but this objection may be obviated by carefully selecting and carding the substance. A better substitute for sponge for cleansing purposes in surgery is cotton wool, which, saturated with soapsuds, or simply with tepid water, and held in a dressing forceps, forms an admirably soft application that may be used where the finest sponge would be found by the patient rough and harsh. Indeed, considerations of cleanliness and of avoiding the diffusion of morbific matters from patient to patient, suggest that sponge used once as a detergent implement should not be used in the case of any other individual, and not too often on the same person. Cotton or tow forms a detergent implement so cheap that it may be renewed at every dressing, and ought to be substituted for sponge, without any reference to cost, for cleansing purposes.

"It is said that cotton or lint placed over a suppurating wound serves to *prevent* the escape of pus, and that oakum should be substituted. But it seems that oakum as well as lint may block the way and hinder the flow of the escaping liquids, if not removed when saturated. Then why should a copiously discharging wound be enveloped in any capillary material? Why not permit the discharge to flow without impediment of any kind? Any contrivance which would keep the wounded part at a normal temperature, whether in the form of oiled silk, or other tissue not readily permeated by moisture, or in shape of a simple veil or shield from flies in hot weather, might prove more salutary than the effects of a bunch or pledget of wiry oakum secured over it by bandage or otherwise.

"Supposing that oakum possesses all the qualities claimed for it in the instances specified, it cannot be regarded as a substitute for patent lint, because there is often necessity for just such a pliant tissue to serve as the vehicle in the application of ointments to morbid surfaces—such as blisters, for example.

"Substitutes are almost always defective expedients. Whether they are adopted from parsimony, poverty, or other reason, they rarely satisfy the requirements they are employed to meet. The workman who uses implements in all respects adapted to his vocation produces more perfect results than he who labours with a paucity of tools, and hence, driven to expedients, is compelled to require from his awl the work of a gimlet.

"Oakum is, doubtless, applicable as a substitute to some ends. It may answer as an external dressing, a mere recipient of liquid discharges; but for such purposes, as it costs much more and has less capillarity, it is a poor substitute for tow. Its application to the uses to which patent lint is especially adapted could be suggested only where no soft tissue is procurable. Canton flannel would answer the place of patent lint better than oakum; but, comparing their adaptability to the object in view, the propriety of substituting Canton flannel, at thirty-five cents the square yard, for patent lint, while this is procurable at forty cents, does not commend itself to notice."

Croup—Tracheotomy—Fatal Result.—Dr. Jacobi presented to the New York Pathological Society (Sept. 10, 1862) the respiratory organs of a child two years of age, who died ten o'clock of the night before of croup. He related the following history of the case: I first saw the child in consultation last Friday morning. He had been suffering for about ten or twelve days from nasal and laryngeal catarrh, and when the attending physician was called, twenty-four hours before I saw the child, there were well established symptoms of croup. Not only was there more or less occlusion of the larynx, but also diphtheritic membranes covering the tonsils and the adjoining parts of the pharynx. The physician made use of the usual remedies, but the symptoms grew more and more grave every hour, and when I was summoned suffocation seemed so imminent that I thought it best to resort to tracheotomy at once. The operation was performed in the usual way, with the exception that the incision into the trachea was made through the thyroid body. The hemorrhage which followed this procedure was very much less than I expected it would be.

The operation under the circumstances was considered justifiable, inasmuch as I could not make out there was any pneumonia present. About twenty minutes after the operation the child breathed pretty well, and pulse ranged from 135 to 140 per minute. The pulse increased in frequency until the afternoon when it was about 150. The child then took a little of Horwood's tinct. of veratrum viride, a drop every two hours, and the following morning appeared evidently better, there being no positive symptoms of bronchitis present. During